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MRS. CLANCY'S CAR RIDE

A Farce in One Act

BY

EDWARD ELLIS and EDITH ELLIS BAKER

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"MRS. CLANCY'S CAR RIDE"

Characters

MRS. CLANCY, a wash woman.
PATRICK CLANCY, her son.
CAR CONDUCTOR.
PASSENGERS.

Scenes

SCENE I.—*Exterior of Mrs. Clancy's shanty in the Bronx.*
SCENE II.—*Interior of a street-car.*

SCENE I.—Exterior of Mrs. Clancy's shanty in the Bronx.

SCENE II.—Interior of a street-car.

TIME—The Present.

SCENE I.—*A drop hung in I. painted to represent a squatter district like old Harlem. On the lower right hand is painted a hut with door. This door is made practical by cutting it out of the drop and backing it with a piece of house scenery containing door.*

In the centre of the drop and two feet from the floor, is an opening about fifteen feet long and seven feet high. In Scene I. this opening is covered by a curtain a little larger than the opening and painted to blend in with the drop.

LIGHTS full up. Lively music at rise.

PATRICK. (*Enters from door of house at rise and speaks to some one in the house. He wears a cap and sweater and has the huge shoulders and manner of a "fighter".*) I tell you I'm due at Mulligan's.

MRS. CLANCY. (*Inside house.*) Well, you got to take the wash home.

PATRICK. (*Starting L.*) I'll take it home to-morrow.

MRS. CLANCY. (*Has bonnet and shawl over one arm and carries a small clothes basket, evidently full, over which is tied a thin covering of cheese*

cloth.) To-morrow, is it? Now what kind of talk is it yer given me?

PATRICK. To-day's only Friday; they don't have to change their clothes till to-morrow.

MRS. CLANCY. But I promised thim fer a Friday.

PATRICK. I'm due at Mulligan's, I tell you, to meet me trainer. Take 'em home yerself.

MRS. CLANCY. I got to go to market and get the corned beef fer the dinner. Will ye take it this evenin'?

PATRICK. I can't. I'm taking Maggie Kavanaugh to the street-cleaners' ball.

MRS. CLANCY. What? That little wizened up—

PATRICK. Ah, cut. She's me stiddy. Ye'll have to take this wash home yerself.

MRS. CLANCY. But I don't know the way. Lord knows whin I was down town last. I'd lose meself.

PATRICK. Ye take a Second Avenue down, a cross-town and then a Tenth Avenue. See?

MRS. CLANCY. How's that I take a Second Avenue up and—

PATRICK. (*Impatiently*) No, no. Down; you take it down. Say, I got to hurry. (*Starts L.*)

MRS. CLANCY. (*Hanging on to him.*) Oh, I take a Second Avenue down.

PATRICK. Yes, dat's it.

MRS. CLANCY. And a cross-town up.

PATRICK. (*Trying to get away.*) Yes, yes, you'll find it all right.

MRS. CLANCY. And where do they live?

PATRICK. At the Swellcrest, Tenth Avenue and Fifty-Seventh. (*Breaks away from her.*)

MRS. CLANCY. Now, wait a minute.

PATRICK. Do you want to queer me wid de bunch? I got to go. (*Exits briskly L. I.*)

MRS. CLANCY. (*Calling after him.*) Ye have

the roight to take this home yerself, Patrick. (*Looks after him and gives a little laugh.*) Ain't he the stubborn thing? Just loike his father. His father was the stubbornest man. I've known the policemen to have to crack his head open before Clancy would give up and git into the patrol wagon. Oh, all the Clancys are loike that. Now on my side of the house— (*Her eye falls on basket and her thought changes.*) I wonder would I take the wash home now or go to market first? Patrick should have tuk 'em. But my, oh my, the by's so busy these days, it's small wonder he fergits his home jooties. Did ye notice the build av him? Shoulders loike that. (*Measures.*) And the muscles; did ye observe the muscles av him? Why, they's regular biceps. I couldn't describe 'em to ye. 'Twould knock ye down to feel 'em. And, say, (*proudly*) it's the great reputation he's got. Oh, he's a foighter all right. Why, only last week he laid out two men and four Swedes. Yes, and when the bartender butted in he handed him his. I don't know what he handed him, but Patrick explained it to me after I paid his fine the next morn. Oh, he's a foine by. He's gettin' into regular muscular society now. They call him the Harlem Shine. Ain't that great? They're gettin' up a match fer him. His picture's goin' to be in all the papers. It's no wonder he don't want to take home the wash. He's a very ambitious by. The Car Barns Club has arranged a match between Patrick and the Jersey Wonder. (*Confidentially.*) The girls do be just crazy after him and that little runt Maggie Kavanaugh, she that's in the corset department at Hearnes, well she's pinin' away that fast fer him that her mother's givin' her thim Pink Pills fer Pale People. Much good will they do her. The idea of a Kavanaugh tryin' to but into the Clancy family. It's terrible the persumption some people has, anyway. (*Tying*

on her bonnet.) Well, this ain't gittin' the wash home. And thim people waitin' fer it. Oh, but they're the loveliest people. They live in one of thim compartment houses. Oh, it's grand? They have the dumb waiters in uniform. It's the Swillcrest. I've niver been there, but Patrick says they have palm trees growing roight up out of the marble floors. Think of it. Ot, it's wonderful the things ye can see nowadays. Oh, my, yes, they're lovely people. She doesn't even wash out her pocket handkerchiefs. Everything comes to me. and he—oh, he's a grand man. Loike a new pin. No rubbin' at all on his wrist-bands. And ye know what *some* people are; they're that—well, say, it takes a washwoman to read people's characters. It's no sign because a woman has got her hair manicured into one of thim wash-board waves that there's no holes in her stockin's. No, sir. (*Puts on shawl.*) I'll have to take this home meself, I suppose. I wonder now can I foind the place. I haven't been down town since I wint to the christenin' of me neice's twins. Now, how is it I go? I take the Second Avenue car down, and git a transfer across, then transfer up. (*Picks up basket.*) That's it. Down and over and up, and I'm there. Then up and over and down and I'm home agin. I'll go to the butcher's on me way back. I mus' git home early. It's very dangerous fer an attractive woman to be out after dark these days. Sure I'll take no chances. (*Exits L. I.*)

—CURTAIN—

SCENE II.—*Set same as Scene I. except that the small curtain is raised and through the opening in the drop is disclosed the interior of a street car—an ordinary car, cut in two lengthwise, and one-half set up behind the opening in drop conveying the idea intended.*

The absolutely necessary furnishings of this car are the seat, the fare register, bell-rope, strap hangers, and rear door, but the set can be elaborated to the extent of having glass windows instead of the painted ones and a moving panorama back of window. Revolving wheels, warning gong, brake and whirring motor effects. Dummy figures could also be used to help fill the car.

In rehearsing, great care must be taken to get the swaying of the passengers in the proper directions as the car starts and stops.

NOTE.

It is suggested if the military conditions are too difficult for adequate scenery that the second scene (Interior of a Street Car) could be suggested by two benches facing each other.—The pulling of the bell rope could be suggested by pantomime. In this case all that would be needed would be two different toned bells; one for ringing up the fares, the other to notify the motorman.

In Scene I. the lights are full up, but in Scene II. the car should be lighted from behind the drop and the lights in front of it lowered so that the drop is indistinguishable.

(Discovered at rise, the conductor on the platform rear, and a drunken man who sits in the rear end of the car half asleep. Conductor rings bell once. Drunken man rouses and thinks he should get off, struggles up from his seat.)

CONDUCTOR. *(Reaching in and shoving him back into his seat.)* What's de matter wid you? Dis ain't where you get off. *(Passengers enter.)* Step lively. Step lively.

(Four men enter the car, the first a Jew with a pack done up in black oilcloth. He goes to the front end and sits, putting his pack on the floor in front of him. Next comes a young Bowery

youth who looks very sporty. Next a business man, and last a working man with his dinner pail. The conductor rings twice and all sway as if with hte jerk of the car. The drunken man has gone to sleep again. The conductor enters the car.) Fare, please! Fare, please. (*All get out fares. The Jew gives him a transfer. Conductor looks at it and hands it back.*) Dat ain't no good. Dat's a week old. Come on now, dig up your coin. (*Jew reluctantly pays fare. Conductor continues collecting fares and ringing them up. Conductor, in the midst of collecting, looks out of window as if he saw passengers signalling car. He rings once. All sway. He sees that there are no passengers to get on, rings twice. All sway the opposite way. Drunken man gets up and tries to get off. Conductor goes after him, pulls him back and flings him into his seat again.*) Say, what are ye doin' there? Wait till I put you off, will you? (*Rings once for car to stop again.*) Step lively there, please. (*He is in the centre of car. Sees Jew's pack on the floor.*) Keep that junk in yer lap. Dis ain't no freight car. (*Impatient at delay of passenger in getting on the car.*) Step lively there, please.

(*Mrs. Clancy struggles up on back platform with her basket. As she gets to the door, the conductor rings twice, all sway, she goes backward as if going over the back of the car. The conductor runs to her and pulls the basket forward and her with it. The business man is just standing up putting his change back in his pocket. As the conductor pulls Mrs. Clancy forward, the impetus starts her and she falls forward, slamming her basket against the conductor. He stumbles against the man standing, who in turn is almost thrown down.*)

CONDUCTOR. (*To Mrs. Clancy*) Say, what's de matter wid you? What do you tink yer doin'?

(*The business man glares at her and seats himself, pulling out a newspaper and reading it, as do the Bowery Boy and the working man. There is but one seat left, and that is between the Jew and the Bowery boy. Mrs. Clancy runs up and down the car with her basket, looking on both sides for a seat. She finally sees the one vacant.*)

MRS. CLANCY. It's a wonder ye wouldn't move over. (*Sits and tries to take her basket on her lap. Shoves her arms into the chests of the men on either side of her and tears the newspaper of the one on her left with her elbow. Both men look angrily at her.*)

CONDUCTOR. Say, lady, be careful wid dat basket. You ought to hire an express wagon.

MRS. CLANCY. None of yer personal remarks, young man, or I'll report ye.

(*Conductor rings one; all sway; she makes a grab at her basket as it slips from her grasp and all but falls off her seat. She sways over against the Jew, who resents it.*)

MRS. CLANCY. What's the matter wid this car, anyway?

CONDUCTOR. Step lively. (*Man enters car. There is no seat so he hangs onto strap with one hand and holds newspaper with the other. The Conductor rings twice. All lurch back. It dislodges Mrs. Clancy and she lurches against the man who is standing.*)

MRS. CLANCY. I beg yer pardon but (*adjusting her bonnet*) it's as much as yer loif is worth to try and keep yer bonnet straight in these street cars. (*Down in seat again.*) The boat I came over in was never loike this. My, oh, my! (*The Bowery boy on her left is reading the sporting page of the Journal. She looks over onto his paper, becomes interested. Stoops and tries to see what is on the other side. Sees something that interests her and tries to take the paper from*

him.) I was wonderin' if my son's picture wouldn't be in here. He's one of the foighters. Oh, yes. He's the Harlem Shine. (*The man jerks his paper away and resumes reading. She recognizes some one across the way.* Well, well, and is that you, Mrs. Kavanaugh? What are ye doin' so far from home? What? Goin' to the theatre? It's a wonder you wouldn't be home doin' yer work of a Friday. (*Indicates Jew.*) Will you look at this? (*With a gesture of disgust.*) Ain't it terrible the quare lookin' people you meet on the cars? And the furreigners, why the city's just aloive wid 'em. That's why I'd loike to live in the Bronx. It's so aristocratic. And, say, have ye been up to the Zoo lately? What? Yes. Say, ain't it gettin' fashionable? Yes, all the Grand Opera folks. Oh, yes—yes—Sure—The monkey house is a great place. (*Looks opposite as if at some one down the line further—Indignantly*) Would ye—why—would ye look at that! Why ye ould devil. Stop yer makin' eyes at me. (*To Mrs. Kavanaugh.*) Do you see that ould dude tryin' to flirt wid me? (*To the man*) Ye ought to be ashamed of yerself. (*Man on her left whispers to her.*) What? Chauncey Depew, is it? Sure, I don't care if he was Chauncey Olcott. He can't flirt wid me. I'm a decent woman. (*Hand up to ring bell.*)

Mrs. Clancy. I've lost me transfer.

Conductor. (*Bawling.*) Do you want to get off?

Mrs. Clancy. (*Goes down to door leaving basket.*) Will ye wait fer me till I go and look fer me transfer?

Conductor. Naw. Dis ain't no lost and found department.

Mrs. Clancy. Well, you see, I must have dropped it and—

Conductor. Well, den you'll have to pay anud-

der fare, see?

MRS. CLANCY. My, oh my, all the profit will be off the wash. (*The man who was standing has taken her seat and is now reading his newspaper. She goes back to seat, sees a man in it, gets confused as to where she was sitting. Picks up her basket and runs up and down the aisle with it.*) Sure, I know I was sittin' down here somewhere. I know I had a seat. You saw me sittin' down, didn't ye, Mrs. Kavanaugh? (*Realizes that her seat has been taken.*)

(*Conductor, instead of immediately giving change, looks out of window as if he saw passengers waiting. Rings once, then twice, as if no one was to get on after all. Mrs. Claney still holding out her hand for change.*)

MRS. CLANCY. Give me me change, why don't you?

CONDUCTOR. (*Giving change.*) Give me a chance, can't you? (*Goes back on platform.*)

MRS. CLANCY. (*Putting purse back.*) If ye don't watch 'em, they'll steal ye blind. Say, Conductor, don't fergit to tell me whin we git to Ninth avenue. (*To Mrs. Kavanaugh.*) It's a wonder some of these men wouldn't get up and give me a seat. I had a seat next the Sheeney there and I lost it. (*Swings around on the strap as car lurches and all sway with it.*) Say, Mrs. Kavanaugh, that's a very swell seal skin sacque you have on there. What? "Yer husband gave it to ye"? Oh yes. I heard there was a fur store broke into last week. Oh, that's all right, let thim put on style as kin pay for it.

(*Conductor rings once. All sway. Mrs. Clancy loses hold on strap and knocks the business man's hat off. Young shop girl gets on car. She wears a large picture hat and a pompadour over one eye. She walks very much with a "straight front" effect. She sees there is no seat, is about to grab*

strap when all the men rise and offer her a seat. Even the drunken man struggles up out of his seat.)

DRUNKEN MAN. What's the matter, is there a fire?

(*The shop girl goes to seat between the Bowery boy and the last man who entered. As she sits they all sit again, squeezing each other. Mrs. Clancy tries to get in, but they all get seated first and she is left out. The shop girl looks very proud and haughty. All the men are staring at the shop girl over their papers.*)

MRS. CLANCY. What do you think of that now? It's a great pity I didn't do me hair in a pompedour and wear me bonnet standin' upside down. (*All the men suddenly cease looking at the girl and bury their heads in their papers. Swinging round on strap, in a burst of wrath addressing the whole car*) For the love of Hivin, have none of ye homes? (*All look up and scowl at her, then back into their papers again. To conductor.*) Don't fergit to tell me whin we git to Ninth Avenue. (*She stands on the feet of the business man.*)

BUSINESS MAN. Madam, you are standing on my feet.

MRS. CLANCY. Well, what were feet made for but to stand on? Conductor, are we at Ninth Avenue yet?

CONDUCTOR. Say, lady, when we get to Ninth Avenue, I'll tell you. See?

MRS. CLANCY. Be sure ye do now. (*Man next the drunk gets off. Conductor rings once for stop. All sway. Mrs. Clancy grabs her basket while he is letting off and gets to seat as the conductor rings twice and all sway. She lands on the lap of the man on her left—the working man. Her basket goes onto the lap of the business man and he throws it across the girl to the Bowery Boy, who slams the Jew on the head with it. The Jew*

utters a howl of pain. The basket falls on the floor. All the passengers growl and express their disgust. .Chasing the basket) Stop, stop, hould on there. Do you know whose wash yer throwin' around? (*Gets her basket and comes back to her seat.*) It's a wonder a lady can't get into a car widout her wash bein' thrown all over the place. (*Seats herself again.*) Conductor, conductor.

CONDUCTOR. What is it? (*Enters car.*)

MRS. CLANCY. Ye didn't give me a transfer.

CONDUCTOR. Ye didn't ask fer one.

MRS. CLANCY. Oh, didn't I? Well, I'm askin' fer one now.

CONDUCTOR. Can't give ye one now, lady.

MRS. CLANCY. And for why can't you give me one?

CONDUCTOR. Against the rules.

MRS. CLANCY. Never you mind the rules, you give me a transfer.

CONDUCTOR. Can't do it. Ye didn't ask fer it when you paid yer fare.

MRS. CLANCY. (*Getting angry and loud.*) Well, I'm askin' fer it now, ain't it?

CONDUCTOR. (*Pointing to a supposed sign on opposite side of car.*) Passengers desiring transfers must ask conductor for them at the time fare is paid. Can't you read dat?

MRS. CLANCY. And do you think I can pay me fare, hang on to a strap and ask for a transfer all at the same time. What do ye think I am?

CONDUCTOR. (*Gives her a yellow transfer.*) Here ye are, And de next time you ask fer it when ye pays yer fare. See?

MRS. CLANCY. Don't forget when we get to Ninth Avenue. (*Conductor goes out on platform.*)

CONDUCTOR. Don't tell me that again, please. (*Kicks over the pail of the working man sitting next to her on left. It rolls off. He gets it and*

looks angrily at her. She is examining transfer.)

MRS. CLANCY. Say, Conductor, come here.

CONDUCTOR. What do you want?

MRS. CLANCY. (*Holding up transfer.*) Say, haven't ye got any green transfers? I don't like this yellow one.

CONDUCTOR. Say, if you don't look out I'll take it away from you and you won't get any.

MRS. CLANCY. Have ye no green ones at all?

CONDUCTOR. Naw, I tell you. (*Goes out on back platform.*)

MRS. CLANCY. It's very funny he wouldn't have any green ones. (*The working man has put his dinner pail on his left instead of next her. The drunken man sways over sleepily and almost gets his head on her shoulder. She makes a gesture of disgust at the odor.*) Whew! My, oh my! (*Pushes him away from her.*) Where do you think you are? Leanin' over a bar? (*To the man on her left.*) Say, would ye moind changin' seats wid me. (*The workingman impatiently gets up and changes seats, forgetting his dinner pail, which is now on the floor left of Mrs. Clancy.*) Thank you. Conductor, Conductor.

CONDUCTOR. (*Entering.*) What is it?

MRS. CLANCY. Why don't you put that drunken man off?

CONDUCTOR. I'll put you off if you don't keep quiet. (*Exits door.*)

MRS. CLANCY. Will you listen to him, Mrs. Kavanaugh? What do you suppose Patrick would do to him if he heard that remark? I guess the champion middleweight of Harlem would teach him a lesson in street car manners.

CONDUCTOR. (*Calling out.*) Ninth Avenue.

MRS. CLANCY. (*Paying no attention.*) Say, I hear your bye Tim lost his job on the Jersey Central.

CONDUCTOR. (*Rings bell once. All sway.*)

Ninth Avenue.

Mrs. Clancy. I hope Maggie don't lose her job in the corset department or ye'll be hangin' up yer seal skin sacque fer the winter's coal.

Conductor. (*Angrily in doorway.*) Say, lady, do you want to get out at Ninth Avenue?

Mrs. Clancy. Is this Ninth Avenue?

Conductor. Yes. Do you want to get off.

Mrs. Clancy. No, but I've got a friend that's rinted a flat on this corner. I want to see what the neighborhood's loike. (*Peers out opposite side of car.*) There's the place, Mrs. Kavanaugh. Sixteen dollars a month and four flights up. I don't think they're cheap, do you? (*Conductor rings bell twice viciously. All sway.*)

Conductor. (*Coming in to her.*) Say, you're annoying everybody in de car.

Conductor. If you don't keep quiet I'll put you off.

Mrs. Clancy. Will ye listen to that? Say, what's your number?

Conductor. Never mind my number, you just keep still.

Mrs. Clancy. Somebody get that fresh conductor's number for me. He'll get a call from the Harlem Shine that'll make him lay off fer a month. (*Looks to see where she is.*) Where are ye takin' me anyway. Let me off this car. I want to get off at Tenth Avenue. (*Grabs rope of register and keeps pulling it and it goes on registering fares with every pull.*

Conductor. (*Furious and rushing in the car.*) Here, what are ye doin' thare? Stop that!

Mrs. Clancy. You stop this car!

Conductor. Don't ye know dat costs me money?

Mrs. Clancy. Well, stop the car whin I tell you then. (*A big crash. All the passengers are thrown into confusion. Conductor runs out back*

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and looks ahead. Mrs. Clancy's basket covering has come loose, and in the melee the clothes begin to fall out.)

CONDUCTOR. All out. Car ahead.

(The passengers scramble to get out. The garments from her basket catch on them. They pick them up and toss them around. The articles get on their heads, over their arms. One man tosses a pair of ladies' hose over the strap pole. Mrs. Clancy is trying to get the pieces as the curtain falls.)

Second Curtain.—(All are out of the car but Mrs. Clancy, who is getting the things back in the basket. Just as she puts them in and is starting, the conductor shouts, "All aboard," *rings bell once. Mrs. Clancy falls, sitting in her basket.)*